

Message Text

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TOPOL 11

FOL SENT ACTION SECSTATE WASHDC USIA WASHDC INFO NATO LONDON
COPENHAGEN OSLO COMICEDEFOR OCTOBER 3, 1973 FROM REYKJAVIK
REPEATED TO YOU QUOTE

UNCLAS REYKJAVIK 1168

JOINT USIS/EMBASSY MESSAGE

EUR/NE FOR AMBASSADOR IRVING

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PBOR UK IC

SUBJECT: FISHERIES DISPUTE: MEDIA COMMENTARY ON BRITISH WITH-
DRAWAL DECISION

1. SUMMARY: ICELANDIC PRESS OCT 3 IN COMMENTARIES AND
INTERVIEWS SUGGESTS REASONS FOR HEATH GOVERNMENT'S
DECISION TO WITHDRAW FLEET AND TUGBOATS FROM 50 MILE FISHERIES
AREA. OPPOSITION MORGUNBLADID SUGGESTS REASON PRINCIPALLY DUE
TO ACTION OF NATO ALLIES AND SECGEN. PROGRESSIVE PARTY'S
TIMINN SAYS NEITHER BRITISH NOR NATO ACTED UNTIL ICELANDIC
DETERMINATION TO BREAK RELATIONS WAS MADE CLEAR. PEOPLE'S
ALLIANCE THJODVILJINN SAYS FIRMNESS OF GOI WAS SINGLE REASON FOR
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BRITISH -RETREAT". NORWEGIAN FONMIN VARVICK'S PLEASURE WITH

LUNS' ROLE IS PLAYED PROMINENTLY IN MORGUNBLADID: INTERVIEWS WITH POLITICIANS ON BRITISH REASONS PARALLEL THOSE IN THE VARIOUS PARTY NEWSPAPERS. END SUMMARY.

2. REYKJAVIK'S PARTISAN NEWSPAPERS OCT 3 SUGGEST VARYING REASONS FOR THE BRITISH DECISION OCT 1-2 TO WITHDRAW ITS FLEET AND TUGBOATS FROM ICELAND'S UNILATERALLY DECLARED 50-MILE FISHERIES JURISDICTION.

3. MORGUNBLADID, INDEPENDENCE PARTY, SAYS IN EDITORIAL "IT HAS NOW BECOME CLEAR THAT THE ACTIONS OF OUR ALLIES IN NATO HAVE INFLUENCED THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT TO WITHDRAW THEIR FLEET FROM THE 50 MILES. AS EARLY AS JUNE, DURING THE NATO MINISTERIAL MEETING IN COPENHAGEN, IT BECAME APPARENT THAT WE HAD STRONG SUPPORT FROM OUR NATO ALLIES, AND LATER THAT THEY ALL SUPPORTED US, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE BRITISH, WITH EVEN WEST GERMANY OPPOSED TO THE SHOW OF FORCE.

"SECRETARY GENERAL LUNS HAS BEEN IN THE FOREFRONT IN EXERTING HIS INFLUENCE TO HAVE THE BRITISH WITHDRAW. AS A MATTER OF FACT, HE HAS GONE SO FAR IN HIS ACTIONS AND COMMENTS THAT THE BRITISH AUTHORITIES HAVE SEEN REASON TO PROTEST HIS POSITION.

" THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF NATO COULD NOT, OF COURSE, HAVE GONE THIS FAR IF HE HAD NOT HAD THE SUPPORT OF THE NATO NATIONS. HE SPEAKS AS A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE NATO NATIONS, NOT AS AN INDIVIDUAL.

"THE INDEPENDENCE PARTY MADE THE INITIAL SUGGESTION THAT THE MATTER BE SUBMITTED TO NATO AND MET THE APPROVAL OF THE ICELANDIC GOVERNMENT. THE IP ALSO RECOMMENDED THAT THE MATTER BE PUT BEFORE THE U.N. SECURITY COUNCIL, BUT THE ICELANDIC GOVERNMENT HELD THAT THE MATTER WOULD BE MORE APPROPRIATELY HANDLED BY NATO. THIS POSITION OF THE GOVERNMENT CERTAINLY WAS A VOTE OF CONFIDENCE FOR NATO AND WE HAVE NOW SEEN THAT OUR ALLIES HAVE NOT DESERTED US. ONE MUST REALIZE THAT NATO CANNOT PASS RESOLUTIONS UNLESS THERE IS UNANIMOUS AGREEMENT, AND THEREFORE COULD ONLY PUT INCREASING PRESSURE ON THE BRITISH."

4. TIMINN, ORGAN OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S AND FOREIGN MINISTER'S UNCLASSIFIED

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PROGRESSIVE PARTY, TAKES A DIFFERENT TACK: "THE DECISION OF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT TO WITHDRAW CERTAINLY SHOULD BE WELCOMED. HOWEVER, IT DOES NOT CHANGE THE FACT THAT THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT WAS PRESSURED TO DO SO BY THE DETERMINED POSIITION OF THE ICELANDIC GOVERNMENT TO BREAK OFF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS SHOULD THE FLEET NOT BE WITHDRAWN.

"NO REACTION WAS PROMPTED EITHER BY THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT

NOR THE NATO ALLIANCE UNTIL IT BECAME CLEAR THAT THE ICELANDIC GOVERNMENT WOULD BREAK DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS IF THE FLEET WERE NOT WITHDRAWN.

"ALONGSIDE THE WILL TO NEGOTIATE THE GOVERNMENT HAS TO SHOW DETERMINATION. THIS IS BEST DEMONSTRATED BY THE FACT THAT THE MATTER FIRST STARTED MOVING AFTER THE FIRM DECISION OF THE PROGRESSIVE PARTY AT ITS HALLORMSTADUR MEETING (NOTE: WHERE THE PARTY PASSED ITS RESOLUTION TO CONDITIONALLY BREAK DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS). FIRST THEN DID NATO REACT SERIOUSLY AND THE SECRETARY GENERAL CAME TO ICELAND AND SUBSEQUENTLY WORK HARD ATD HAVING THE FLEET REMOVED. THIS SHOWS THAT NOTHING WILL BE ACCOMPLISHED UNLESS THE MATTER IS PURSUED WITH DETERMINATION." TIMINN EDITORIAL IS SIGNED BY THORARINN THORARINSSON, EDITOR AND CHAIRMAN OF THE ALTHING'S FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE.

5. THJODVILJINN, ORGAN OF THE FISHERIES MINISTER'S PEOPLE'S ALLIANCE PARTY SAYS: "NO ONE CAN DOUBT THAT IT WAS ONLY THE FIRM DETERMINATION OF THE ICELANDIC GOVERNMENT AND THE CLEAR THREAT TO CUT DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH THE BRITISH SHOULD THE FLEET NOT WITHDRAW WHICH MADE THE GOVERNMENT RETREAT FROM THEIR UNTENABLE POSITION.

"IT SHOULD BE UNDERLINED THAT IT HAS BECOME CLEAR THAT THE CONSERVATIVE BRITISH GOVERNMENT RECOGNIZES ONLY THE UTMOST FIRMNESS FROM OUR SIDE.

"THE BRITISH THREATEN TO RETURN WITH THEIR FLEET IF ICELANDIC LAW IS ENFORCED WITHIN THE ICELANDIC FISHERIES LIMITS. MR. HEATH SHOULD NOW KNOW, HOWEVER, THAT WE WILL FOLLOW ICELANDIC LAW IN THIS RESPECT--AND NOT DIRECTIONS FROM LONDON OR OTHER HEADQUARTERS OF OUR 'COMRADES IN ARMS' IN NATO."

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6. ALTHYDUBLADID, ORGAN OF THE SECOND OPPOSITION PARTY, THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS, HAS NO EDITORIAL COMMENTARY ON THE WITHDRAWAL OCTOBER 3.

7. IN INTERVIEWS WITH POLITICIANS, MORGUNBLADID QUOTES PRIMIN AS SAYING "WE KNOW THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF N
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